

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN MICHAEL K. POWELL**

*Re: In the Matter of Nationwide Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Section 106
National Historic Preservation Act Review Process*

Earlier this month, I announced the launch of the Commission's Environmental and Historic Preservation Action Plan. The goal of the plan is to improve our ability to protect valuable historic and environmental resources, while at the same time accelerating the process of deploying necessary communications infrastructure. The Nationwide Programmatic Agreement is a vital piece of that plan and I am committed to moving forward to finalize the Agreement as soon as possible.

The proposed agreement seeks to clarify the regulatory muddle and delay that has beset many tower-construction proposals by defining key terms, establishing public-participation standards and describing how to submit projects to State Historic Preservation Officers. Our goal is to identify promptly those proposed sites that do impact historic sites and develop mitigation plans or alternative siting plans that allow services to be deployed in those areas. The proposed agreement will also serve to allow those sites that do not have any potential historic impact to move forward without regulatory delay.

We developed this proposed agreement in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. I want to thank the members and staff of each of these bodies for their participation in crafting the draft Nationwide Agreement. I also wish to thank the United South and Eastern Tribes and other tribes and tribal organizations for their insights on the review process with respect to properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to Indian tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations. Working together, we have developed an innovative proposal for enhancing historic preservation, eliminating unnecessary regulatory burdens and encouraging cooperation among parties.